

AMERICAN BOOK CO'S. SCHOOL BOOKS IN VIRGINIA

US Reply to the Charges of the Norfolk Pilot Newspaper and a Full Statement of the Situation and Facts as to its Prices.

SOME INTERESTING READING FOR THE PUBLIC.

The Reason for the Company's Notice of the Charges.

Justice to itself as a Publishing Company and to its Friends in Virginia, Who Have Honored Them With Confidence and Patronage, Compels a Notice of False and Intemperate Charges.

THE TRUTH AS TO THE PRICES OF SCHOOL BOOKS.

The American Book Company Have, by the Establishment of a New Retail Rate, Secured to the people a Practical Reduction in the Retail Price of School Books of From 33 to 75 Per Cent.

STATEMENT OF THE COMPANY'S SALES OF SCHOOL BOOKS IN VIRGINIA.

It Can Prove That It Has Never Sold More Than \$50,000 Worth in Virginia in More Than One Year. In 1893 the Sales Were \$52,000 and in 1894 They Reached \$59,000. It Estimates That the Entire Sales of School Books in Virginia is Not Over \$100,000.

A VERY COMPLETE AND FULL DENIAL OF THE CHARGES.

New York, February 5, 1895.
To the People of Virginia:

Justice to ourselves as a Publishing Company, and to our friends the people of Virginia, who are honoring us with their confidence and patronage, as they honored our predecessors, makes it our duty to notice in a public way the false and infamous attacks upon our business lately spread abroad in the Norfolk Pilot newspaper. We accept the challenge of the Pilot, and, without waiting for "the slow and voluminous processes of a libel suit," as it editorially taunts us with doing, we will meet the issue and try it by the public, before whom the methods of our business are arraigned.

The outrageous assault on the honor of the Virginia State Board of Education has already been publicly repelled by the Governor and Attorney General with a truthful detail which leaves nothing omitted to convince the fair minded of the absolute integrity and disinterestedness of their transactions. They have shown, to a complete demonstration, that they could not have adopted other books than those they did without going against the united educational sentiment of the State. This sentiment was expressed by county school superintendents and leading teaching authorities, and was substantially unanimous in favor of continuing the books which were satisfactorily in use. In the face of such an expression, the State Board could not have justified their action to the public if they had interrupted and disorganized the schools by compelling the introduction of new and untried books. No more could they have justified their action if they had burdened the people of Virginia, in the midst of unprecedented hard times, with the large expense which any change of school books involves.

The answer of the State Superintendent and others, who by name have had their personal honor assailed, will doubtless be made in the courts, where the issue will be tried by their peers, and face to face with their accusers; and we do not doubt their triumphant vindication.

AN APOLOGY TO THE READER.

Before entering upon our answer to the charges of the Pilot in detail, our self respect compels us to apologize to a sensible public for bringing to their notice the insane ravings of what charity might claim to be "an irresponsible being." It sometimes becomes necessary, according to the scriptural injunction, to "answer a fool according to his folly."

The charges against us are so monstrous and foul, so vicious and violent, that in many respects they become not only ridiculous, but abominably grotesque, and in this way best refute themselves. But amid the Pilot's interminable mass of caparings there are some falsehoods stated as facts, which might mislead the right minded. These require correction and exposure.

THE TRUE INWARDNESS OF THESE INFAMOUS ATTACKS.

To clear the vision at the outset, we will expose the real source and true motives of these assaults. They constitute

A BUSINESS METHOD BY VILIFICATION, which has been adopted by a publishing house that was disappointed and unsuccessful in the late Virginia State adoption. Failing to get its publications selected on their merits, it has the hardihood to charge everything that is corrupt and dishonorable upon the methods of the successful rivals, and to insult the people of Virginia by an attempt to impeach the integrity of its State officials. It aims to open up a market for its own wares by attempting to destroy the market of a competitor. Instead of pressing the merit of its publications, or offering lower prices for the same, it maligns the character

of other publishers, and attacks the character of Virginians. To add to the infamy of such a method, it has the cowardice and hypocrisy to mask itself for these attacks, under the cloak of political reform, in the columns of a public journal. Mr. Small, of the Norfolk Pilot, states editorially that he did not dictate or write a single word or line of the article; and it is known by us just where it was written and prepared, and the agencies and processes by which its publication was secured. We have in our possession letters written by the senior member of a publishing firm threatening to do precisely what has been done in Virginia.

THE PILOT NEWSPAPER'S RESPONSIBILITY.

But the Norfolk Pilot having adopted the role provided for it, has brazenly assumed all the responsibility, and has servilely converted its columns into a common sewer, through which all the filth of these falsehoods is daily discharged.

It would thus appear, from its course, that it had established a joint interest in the school book business. This is confirmed by the Pilot's editorial of January 6, 1895, as follows:

"The books would have been as good as ours in other States, but for the action of the State Board of Education, which, without the excuse of a nickel on the part of the people, we are prepared to show the truth of this statement."

Who is your silent partner, Mr. Pilot? Who is this business philanthropist and what States have been the scenes of his benevolence? And, by the way, what are the every-day prices of his books by which he expects to tax the people to make up for his "gift enterprise" and add a profit to himself besides?

THE ONE SIMPLE FACT OF THE SITUATION.

Let it be remembered that the American Book Company, a little more than four years ago, purchased from the leading firms of Harper & Brothers, D. Appleton & Company, A. S. Barnes & Company, Ivins, Blackman & Company and Van Antwerp, Bragg & Company all their standard school books, the best fruits which all these houses, with unlimited skill and resources, had been able to produce in this line—the crystallization of the best educational thought of two generations—and has been manufacturing these books and supplying them to the public by the same means and agencies through which they were provided and furnished by their predecessors; that instead of having increased prices, they have decreased them; that they have removed all mailing charges, and established many depositories making their books easily obtainable at first cost at every postoffice and crossroads store throughout the country. In the light of all these indisputable facts, the charges made against the American Book Company of wickedness and extortion of every conceivable kind are nothing less than the insane ravings of a madman.

AS TO A TRUST AND MONOPOLY.

The following are quoted as gems from the Norfolk Pilot:

"A trust may be defined as an unjust and illegal organization effected for the purpose of crushing out competition and of exacting from customers, in the absence of competition, exorbitant and unconscionable prices."

"One of the greatest and most corrupt monopolies ever known in this country."

"Gorgon-headed vampire of all the trusts, that has fastened its beak in the very bosom of Virginia."

"Foul cormorant of a corporation."

"Rapacity of a greedy and extortionate monopoly."

"Gigantic monopoly and monster."

"Frontless, brazen and cynical immodesty."

"Maldorons and merciless."

"Sealy old bon constrictor."

All this is certainly tragedy become comedy. We are, indeed, a corporation, but one duly organized, legal, lawful and law abiding. It is not shown or proved that we are unjust. We have not exacted "exorbitant or unconscionable prices." We are selling books cheaper than our predecessors, and cheaper than our present competitors. We employ labor at fair prices; we buy and sell at fair prices, not buying goods or obtaining a market under false pretences, and always honestly and promptly paying our debts. We earnestly endeavor to find out what is wanted, and then by all our skill and means endeavor to produce it and supply it to the people. The country is still free. Those who like our books and want them buy them.

We have not even made a beginning in "crushing out competition." This is plainly and painfully enough shown by the showers of slander and abuse our competitors are bestowing upon us through such of the newspapers as will afford them this advertising.

We are not "gorgon-headed" nor a "vampire," and we have no "beak." Neither are we a "cormorant," nor a "monster," nor a "sealy bon constrictor." In fact, we are just plain every day folks; not undertaking to reform other people, but minding our own business, and letting things alone that we know nothing about, and endeavoring to publish and sell good school books.

We are not "organized to control the school business," but to pursue it and promote it, not to injure the schools, but to supply them with the best books and build them up.

In the same breath we are charged with raising prices, compelling the public to pay more than ever before, and with reducing prices to crush out the competition of smaller houses. We respectfully submit that it is impossible we should be doing both these things at the same time.

THE TRUTH ABOUT OUR PRICES.

Up to 1890, when the American Book Company was formed, it had been the universal custom of all school book publishers to list their books at what were known as "wholesale trade" prices. The prices by mail, postpaid, were uniformly the wholesale list prices with one sixth of the price added to provide for postage. No concerted attempt had ever been made to control the retail prices at which school books were sold to pupils. Amid many and conflicting interests such control could not be accomplished. In many localities from 33 to 75 per cent. was added to the wholesale list price by the local dealer; this formed a just cause of complaint of exorbitant retail prices.

The American Book Company, as soon as it was organized for business, determined to relieve its patrons from the burden of these too high retail prices, and they hoped in this movement the public would recognize a determination to serve their interests. The greatest difficulty previously given to large dealers and Boards of Education was to recognize a determination to serve their interests. The greatest difficulty previously given to large dealers and Boards of Education was to recognize a determination to serve their interests.

The one and leading aim in respect to prices, which has been constantly adhered to by the American Book Company from that time until now, has been to insure, so far as it is in its power, the placing of its publications in the hands of actual consumers, at the trade list prices. One of the most potent influences to effect this change was to advertise everywhere that any of its publications would be sent free by mail on receipt of list price, abolishing the one-sixth addition to the list price which had previously been required to pay postage.

To accomplish this great object—the making of our former wholesale prices the present retail prices—we have not only made the discount of 20 per cent., above named, but in special cases we have incurred very considerable expense to arrange with large jobbers of books, or with depositories established under direction of law, or with Boards of Education, to insure a better distribution of our publications in every region, no matter how remote or difficult of access, at prices which should not be beyond our published wholesale rates.

In establishing this new retail rate the American Book Company, in the ways explained above, has secured to the people a practical reduction in the retail prices of school books of from 33 to 75 per cent., for which action it would seem to deserve credit and not abuse.

VARYING RETAIL PRICES IN DIFFERENT STATES ARE DUE TO VARYING LAWS AND OTHER CONDITIONS.

In different States and under different laws, various methods of reaching this one and the same general end in respect to prices have been made use of; but all of the differences, these two leading statements are absolutely true:

1. We have given to the prime purchasing agencies in each of the States where we have State contracts substantially the same high discount and special concessions for handling and distributing our books.

2. While it is manifestly impossible for this company to follow each one of its books into the hands of the consumer, absolutely insuring it shall reach him at a certain price, it has exerted all its influence and

power to bring about low, just and uniform rates in the manner above described. And whatever differences in retail rates may at present prevail in different parts of the country, can not with any consistency or justice be charged to the American Book Company.

We have generally insured in each State the adoption, by the agencies immediately supplying the pupils, of the former wholesale rate at the present retail rate. But this retail rate has been subject to these two modifications: (1) In some regions distant from railroads and waterways, the school authorities have thought a slight advance of, say, 10 per cent., was no more than just to the dealers who were to handle the books, and this they have allowed to be added to our list prices to make their retail rate. (2) On the other hand, in some States the School Boards have availed themselves of our best discounts and concessions, and have themselves undertaken the responsibility and expense of distributing the books to the pupils, either directly or through local agencies, at a price something like 10 per cent. less than our list prices.

To insure our customers against any increase of prices, we every where offer to contract to supply our books at present rates for a term of years, with the guarantee to give lower rates if such are anywhere and at any time during the contract given to other quarters.

Virginia enjoys from us to day as low prices as we give in any State or section of the country. We guarantee that our wholesale list prices shall be maintained at the rates at retail, and we give our booksholders sufficient discounts to insure these low retail rates. In any lower retail prices prevail in other States,—and less do prevail in two or three,—it is because the school authorities are charged by law with the responsibility and expense of the distribution to the people, thus fixing their own retail rates by making the distributing charge a public expense, instead of depending upon the local book dealers, as in Virginia, to do this work in return for the discount and concessions these dealers receive from us. As publishers we receive from the prime buyers substantially the same prices for our publications in all parts of the country, all statements to the contrary by our enemies notwithstanding.

The following is an illustration of the Pilot's falsehoods, set out in its original article, and repeated in an editorial several days later. It says that we furnish Long's Language Lessons, parts 1 and 2, at one price in Louisiana and the same book at another and higher price in Virginia. The books are not the same. The old edition is used in Louisiana, where it has long been in use. The new edition was entirely rewritten, is larger and more expensive in manufacture. Both are sold at their regular advertised prices, and no one has been deceived or wronged.

The charges, therefore, that we are receiving more for our books in Virginia than in South Carolina, Louisiana, and other States where we have contracts, or that our prices average higher than those of other school book publishers, are also entirely false, and without any foundation in fact. We have guaranteed in our contract with Virginia to give as low prices as anywhere. This clause of our contract has not been evaded or broken in the slightest degree, and we have placed in the hands of the Virginia Board of Education the full, authentic, and indisputable evidence on this point. Meantime we advertise in all our catalogues to send our books at the guaranteed rate to any one in Virginia against imposition in retail prices.

As a further safeguard towards insuring to the pupil the established low retail rates, the Virginia State Board of Education furnishes to each public school teacher, to be posted up in each school room in the State, a large placard, 11 by 21 inches, containing a full list of the books adopted, with the authorized retail prices annexed.

As to exchange rates. The Pilot charges that we make exchange prices less in South Carolina than those contained in the contract with Virginia. What are the facts in the case? There were good reasons for low exchange prices in South Carolina. It was that the books adopted were not already in use throughout all the schools, and many would require to be exchanged and introduced, and for a seven years' adoption we could afford a little lower exchange rate. In Virginia the case was quite different and the exchange prices were not an important factor or consideration, for the reason that the books adopted were already in use and would require little or no exchanging for introduction. Indeed, it would not have affected the interests of the people if the exchange price had been entirely omitted.

As a matter of fact, a careful examination of our introduction accounts shows that our transactions at "exchange prices" throughout the whole State of Virginia in the entire year of 1891 amounted to less than \$100.

Exchange prices are nowhere, among any publishers, an established and unvarying rate. They are only a temporary expedient to get books introduced and into use, and vary largely according to the circumstances surrounding the case, as to the length of the contract, conditions of sale and credit, etc.

AMOUNT OF MONEY ACTUALLY PAID EACH YEAR IN VIRGINIA FOR SCHOOL BOOKS IS NOT OVER \$100,000.

In the Pilot's first article, published December 23, 1891, it is

stated: "The number of enrolled pupils in Virginia in 1891 was 318,471. It is fair, we think, to assume that \$300,000 was expended in the purchase of books, high school and primary."

As the American Book Company can prove that it has never sold more than \$50,000 worth of school books in any one year in the State of Virginia, we would inquire of the Pilot who sells the \$210,000 needed to make up its \$300,000 worth.

Contrary to this false assumption, the evidence in our possession shows that the entire sum annually expended for school books in Virginia cannot be more than \$100,000. At any rate, it is absolutely a fact, as we are prepared to prove by our account books, that in the year 1893 the entire amount of the American Book Company's sales of school books in Virginia, including all supplies for private as well as public schools, amounted to only \$52,000, and in 1894 to only \$59,000. Even at the fair estimate of \$100,000 as a total of school books sold in Virginia annually, firms outside of the American Book Company must sell yearly from \$10,000 to \$50,000. And yet we are charged with monopolizing all the trade and extorting hundreds of thousands of dollars from the people.

WAS THE ADOPTION IN VIRGINIA A FREE AND FAIR ONE?

The published statements of the Governor and Attorney General answer this question with such full detail and circumstance as to leave no doubt that it was completely free and fair. The routine of all previous adoptions was followed.

As to the insinuations and insinuations of "bribery and corruption" made against ourselves, we do most emphatically and unequivocally deny that there is any ground for this outrageous attack upon our business integrity. The courts of justice must determine whether the character and reputation of public officials and of business houses lie at the mercy of rivals in business who are able to hire the columns of a newspaper.

But these bold allegations of the Pilot are a piece with what they say Sunday, January 20, 1895, that our circular, News from Oregon, stating that our books had just been adopted for that State, was false. We repeat here, and deny any denial, that the ship, News from Oregon, was every line, word, and punctuation mark, true; and that which is quoted from the Oregonian was the first sentence of one of its editorials, when the adoption was announced.

ARE THE BOOKS PUBLISHED BY THE AMERICAN BOOK COMPANY INFERIOR IN MERIT TO THOSE OF OTHER PUBLISHERS.

The Norfolk Pilot, referring to our books, says they are "Obsolete in methods and matter."

"Geographies are obsolete," "Histories that falsify," "Scientific books not up to date," etc., etc.

As the largest publishers of school books in the United States, with our publications most widely in use, this charge is only another way of saying that we and the users of our books are all fools; that none of us know good books from poor ones. When it is considered that our company is made up of men skilled and experienced in publishing school books, and with sufficient means to procure the best authorship and the best books, and that our books are used with approval throughout thousands of the most enlightened communities—that they can be poor books is improbable to the point of absurdity.

When the Pilot attacks the merits of the list of books adopted for Virginia, it assails Virginia authors, than whom none stand higher in the whole country. We have the privilege of publishing the lectures of Dr. McGuffey, who was so long and honorably identified with the University of Virginia—the most popular and widely used of any school readers in this country to day. We have also offered for the use of schools in Virginia books bearing the honorable names of Appleton, Harvey, White and Webster. Other books issued by another publisher on the Virginia list, which list is also a general object of attack, are by the honored Virginians, Mayne (Geographies), Holmes (History), Venable (Arithmetics) and Underbush (Latin). But what are names, and what are merits of books, to a gyrating reformer who has gone into the school-book business on his own account with a silent partner?

As to whether our books are thoroughly supervised, kept revised and up to date or not, and as to whether or not the best authors are enlisted by us and their works produced and published, we have no objection to taking the public into our confidence.

We pay in cash, as copyrights, to our large body of authors \$200,000 yearly. Do you think we would pay this for poor books? We maintain an editorial department of the most competent talent that the whole country affords, consisting of three chiefs, three first-class assistants and eight minor assistants, at an expense of \$10,000 a year, whose entire occupation and business is to keep all books on our list thoroughly revised and up to date and to seek out and procure competent authors for the preparation of new books and to supervise the publication of such new books.

We have in this department a complete working library of many thousand volumes, including one of the largest and best collections of American and foreign reference books and school text books in this

country, to which additions are being constantly made.

Does an equipment like this, which is not even approached by any competitor, look as though it were possible for us to be vending old, obsolete, not up-to-date, and worthless publications?

Other publishers are striving to create the impression that we are publishing and selling old books which are poor because they are old while our competitors have new books which are better on account of their newness. But newness is always experiment, and experiment, nineteen times out of twenty, is failure—nowhere more so than in publishing school books.

We beg it to be remembered that the great and standard books of the world are not new ones, but those that have stood the test of time and use. This is no less true of the standard school books. They are the result of growth and cannot be created in a day.

We have on our books many such favorite books, "the survival of the fittest," that cannot be equalled in merit and suitability for schools. The essential facts of knowledge remain the same, with the very little which each year adds. The literature to be read and studied, the facts of history and geography, the principles of mathematics, and the sciences, do not change, and are not new. The development of the physical sciences has been the most rapid growth, and this, with some changes in methods of teaching, constitutes the chief progress which the wise have recognized, and this is fully embodied in all our books. All other newness is fashion, whim, and crankiness—the passing wonder of an hour or a day.

There is a true course between the old and new in school books; it is to hold on to the standards which time and use have thoroughly approved, and to carefully reach out for the new in such subjects and in the direction of such methods as enlightened progress demands; and such a course the American Book Company is pursuing.

IN CONCLUSION.

We submit, in view of the foregoing, that we are reputable men doing a reputable business, furnishing the people meritorious books at fair prices. And we submit, further, that the vilifications of the Norfolk Pilot, copied or quoted on account of their sensational charges by an unscrupulous press throughout the country, is a public outrage, and we ask the people of Virginia, whose sense of honor is famed, to resent with us, and for us, all these infamous imputations upon our character and honor as business men.

AMERICAN BOOK COMPANY.

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The Busiest Store on Main Street
Was the expression of visitors who say the crowds at Levy Bros., 174 Main street, and no wonder, when you hear of the many bargains they are offering in hosiery, underwear, dry goods, and every thing else in their stock. A few left of those white Marseilles bed spreads, at 50c., usually sold at \$1, to close out the lot. Watch paper for our next special sale, Monday, February 18th.

Rheumatism is cured by P. P. P. Pains and aches in the back, shoulders, knees, ankles and wrists, are all attacked and conquered by P. P. P. This great medicine, by its blood-cleansing properties, builds up and strengthens the whole body.

Nothing is so efficacious as P. P. P. at this season, and for toning up, invigorating, and as a strengthener and appetizer take P. P. P. It throws off the malaria and puts you in good condition.

Patronize the Dairy Lunch Rooms, 99 Main street and 26 (old) Market square.

COMING ON.

New, beautiful and useful novelties for birthday and other gifts. Diamonds and watches can be found in greater variety at Frank H. Gale's than elsewhere. 152 Main street.

CLOCKS, KNICKERS, ETC.
A large variety of clocks has just been received at "The Casket," 155 Main street. Large clocks, small clocks, Dresden and iron clocks, nickel clocks, 1 day clocks, 8 day clocks, 30 day clocks, 100 day clocks, clocks from 75c upwards. Clocks repaired by best workmen. For clocks and everything in jewelry lines at bottom prices go to, 155 Main street.

New line of bridal presents, the best line of sterling silver we ever had. New Waterbury watches for \$2.50. Chapman & Jakeman.

Mrs. Emily Thorne, who resides at Toledo, Washington, says she has never been able to procure any medicine for rheumatism that relieves the pain so quickly and effectually as Chamberlain's Pain Balm, and that she has also used it for lame back with great success. For sale by all druggists.

Several cars en route; must be sold; also some on track here. H. E. Owens, 275 Water street.

Another invoice of lamps and tables and new shades. Chapman & Jakeman.

A Good Recommendation.

LA FAYETTE, IND.—"A Mrs. Jas. Fay, living near this city, claims to have been cured by the use of Simonson's Liver Regulator after five or six of the best physicians had pronounced the case hopeless."—Albert A. Wells. Your druggist sells it in powder or liquid; the powder to be taken dry, or made into a tea.

A NEW DISCOVERY BY THE SHAKERS.

For more than a hundred years the Mount Lebanon Shakers have used the cultivation of medical plants and sought to a tract from them the healing of our kind. Their labor has not been in vain. They have the discovery that it will prove a blessing to mankind. It consists of a cordial that affords immediate relief in cases of indigestion. The importance of this discovery will be apparent to all our sufferers, and nine-tenths of all our ailments are caused by dyspepsia or indigestion. Nearly every person you meet has it; digestive trouble in some of its varied forms, pains and distress after eating, pains and distress in the chest after eating, palpitation of the heart, loss of appetite, symptoms of indigestion. To relieve these sufferings has been the study of the Shakers, and the success is the result of the Shaker's Digestive Cordial. It has such a moderate and salutary effect is that it causes the food eaten to be digested, for it is a digested food that causes the distress. The Cordial there in time for it is a stimulant and soothes the stomach. When the food is so digested it gives strength and vigor to the feeble body, makes one feel bright and cheerful and makes one go on in life. The Digestive Cordial is a most prompt and sure remedy for all ailments of the stomach and bowels, and its use will have a direct and salutary effect on the system. After a trial give credit to the Shakers of Mount Lebanon, N. H.

WANTED.

Advertisements of this class, five lines or less, 25 cents for one insertion; 50 cents for three.

WANTED—TO BUY A ROLLING TOP. A second hand, good, cheap, wanted. Address: W. J. Dean's P. O., 161-3-4.

WANTED—A POSITION BY A YOUNG married man, graduate of a commercial college, as shipping clerk in a great export or other work which requires an honest, reliable man; best reference, GEORGE J. H. SMITH, 100 N. 10th St., Philadelphia, Pa. 161-11.

WANTED—A LIVE, ENERGETIC MAN to represent a Philadelphia house in Norfolk and surrounding towns. ADDRESS: FRANKLIN, 201 Walnut street, Philadelphia, Pa. 161-11.

WANTED—A FIRST-CLASS COLORED cook, settler, understands marking. Apply 81 Church street after 8 a. m. 161-3.

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